



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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MARCH 24, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JURY CONVICTS TEXAS MAN FOR POSSESSING 3,000 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that an El Paso, Texas man has been convicted by a federal jury for being in possession with intent to distribute a large quantity of marijuana.

Cesar R. Jara, 45, of El Paso, was found guilty of being in possession with the intent to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana at the conclusion of a trial that began March 21, 2005.

Following the presentation of evidence, jurors deliberated about three hours before returning a guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr on March 23, 2005.

Jara was arrested on Feb. 10, 2004, when law enforcement officers stopped the tractor/trailer he was driving for a commercial motor vehicle compliance check on I-44 in Webster County, Mo. In conducting their check, Graves said, Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers realized that the interior of the trailer measured two feet shorter than the exterior of the trailer. After calling for a drug detection canine unit to assist in searching the trailer, Graves said, they found 394 taped, wrapped bundles of marijuana, weighing a total of 3,074 pounds, hidden in a false compartment.

Under federal statutes, **Jara** could be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in federal prison without parole, up to life in prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$8 million. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly Weber Dean. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, and COMET (the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team).

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow